

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

memory means for separately storing functional generation information and application software, wherein the functional generation information enables the application software, independent of a software version of the application software, to access functions when the functional generation information is concurrently located in the memory means with the application software, the functional generation information including a first URL that corresponds to an external location where the functional generation information is registered, [[and]] a second URL that corresponds to an external location where an update to the application software is registered, and a combination of cryptographic keys;

managing means for managing first functional generation information stored in said memory means that enables the application software to access first functions;

obtaining means for obtaining second functional generation information that, if located in the memory means, would enable the application software to access second functions, wherein the second functional generation information is registered in an information providing apparatus that is remotely located from said information processing apparatus at the first URL and connected to said information processing apparatus via a network, and wherein said obtaining means obtains said second functional generation information based on said first functional generation information;

comparing and determining means for comparing said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information and for determining which of said first or second functional generation information is a newest functional generation information; and

information updating means for, when said comparing and determining means determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, updating said first functional generation information stored in said memory means to said newest functional generation information, such that said memory means contains said second functional generation information and the application software, independent of the software version, is able access the second functions.

2. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising passage determining means for determining whether a predetermined time has passed on a basis of said first functional generation information,

wherein when said passage determining means determines that said predetermined time has passed, said obtaining means obtains said second functional generation information registered in said information providing apparatus via said network.

3. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising application software updating means for updating the application software stored in said memory means to application software corresponding to said second functional generation information located at the second URL, when said comparing and determining means determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information.

4. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further comprising function determining means for determining whether said application software has the second functions corresponding to said second functional generation

information when said comparing and determining means determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information,

wherein when said function determining means determines that said application software does not have the second functions corresponding to said second functional generation information, said application software updating means updates the application software stored in said memory means to a newest application software corresponding to said second functional generation information.

5. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further comprising:

medium determining means for determining whether a recording medium is loaded;
and

reading means for reading third functional generation information that enables an application software recorded on said recording medium to access third functions when said medium determining means determines that said recording medium is loaded,

wherein said comparing and determining means compares said third functional generation information as well as said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information with each other and determines which of the first, second, or third functional generation information is a newest functional generation information,

wherein said information updating means updates said first functional generation information stored in said memory means to said newest functional generation information, such that said memory means contains said newest functional generation language, and

wherein said application software updating means updates the application software stored in said memory means to newest application software corresponding to said newest functional generation information.

6. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein when said obtaining means does not obtain said second functional generation information via said network, said comparing and determining means compares said first functional generation information and said third functional generation information, and determines which of said first or third functional generation information is said newest functional generation information.

7. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein when said comparing and determining process determines that said second functional generation information and said third functional generation information are identical with each other, said information updating means updates said first functional generation information stored in said memory means to said third functional generation information, such that said memory means contains said third functional generation language; and

wherein said application software updating means updates the application software stored in said memory means using application software corresponding to said third functional generation information.

8. (Currently Amended) An information processing method comprising:
storing in a memory first functional generation information and application software, the first functional generation information including a first URL that corresponds to an external location where the functional generation information is registered, ~~and~~ a second URL that corresponds to an external location where an update to the application software is registered, and a combination of cryptographic keys;

obtaining second functional generation information, wherein the second functional generation information would enable the application software to access second functions if the second functional generation information is concurrently located in the memory with the application software, wherein the second functional information is registered in an information providing apparatus that is remotely located from said information processing apparatus at the first URL and connected to said information processing apparatus via a network;

comparing said second functional generation information to the first function generation information stored in the memory, wherein the first functional generation information enables the application software, independent of a software version of the application software, to access first functions;

determining which of said first or second functional generation information is a newest functional generation information; and

updating, when it is determined that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, said first functional generation information stored in said memory to said second functional generation information such that said memory contains said second functional generation information and said application software, independent of the software version, is enabled to access the second functions.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium including computer executable instructions, wherein the instructions, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform a method comprising:

storing in a memory of the computer a first functional generation information and application software, the first functional generation information including a first URL that corresponds to an external location where the functional generation information is registered,

~~and~~ a second URL that corresponds to an external location where an update to the application software is registered, and a combination of cryptographic keys;

obtaining second functional generation information, wherein the second functional generation information would enable the application software to access second functions if the second functional generation information is concurrently located in the memory of the computer with the application software, wherein the second functional information is registered in an information providing apparatus that is remotely and separately located from the computer at the first URL and connected to the computer via a network;

comparing said second functional generation information to the first functional generation information stored in the memory, wherein the first functional generation information enables the application software, independent of a software version of the application software, to access first functions;

determining which of said first or second functional generation information is a newest functional generation information; and

updating, when it is determined that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, said first functional generation information stored in the memory of the computer to said second functional generation information, such that the memory of the computer contains said second functional generation information and said application software, independent of the software version, is enabled to access the second functions.

10. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium including computer executable instructions, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method comprising:

storing in a memory of the computer a first functional generation information and application software, the first functional generation information including a first URL that corresponds to an external location where the functional generation information is registered ~~and~~ a second URL that corresponds to an external location where an update to the application software is registered, and a combination of cryptographic keys;

obtaining second functional generation information, wherein the second functional generation information would enable the application software to access second functions if the second functional generation information is concurrently located in the memory with the application software, wherein the second functional information is registered in an information providing apparatus that is remotely located from said information processing apparatus at the first URL and connected to said information processing apparatus via a network;

comparing said second functional generation information to the first functional generation information stored in said memory, wherein the first functional generation information enables the application software, independent of a software version of the application software, to access first functions;

determining which of said first or second functional generation information is a newest functional generation information; and

updating, when it is determined that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, said first functional generation information stored in said memory to said second functional generation information, such that said memory contains said second functional generation information and said application software, independent of the software version, is enabled to access the second functions.

11. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 1,

~~wherein said functional generation information further includes a combination of cryptographic keys and protocols;~~

wherein said functional generation information is shared among a plurality of application software located in said memory means, such that each of the plurality of application software is enabled to access said functions independent of software versions of the plurality of application software.

12. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 1,

wherein said information processing apparatus is a personal computer;

wherein said information providing apparatus is a server configured to provide said personal computer a music content distribution service;

wherein said application software receives a copyrighted material from said music content distribution service; and

wherein said functional generation information enables said application software to receive and use said copyrighted material.

13. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 5,

wherein said information processing apparatus is a personal computer;

wherein said information providing apparatus is a server configured to provide said personal computer a music content distribution service;

wherein said recording medium is a optical disc; and

wherein the third functional generation information would enable said application software located to access said third functions if said third functional generation information and said application software are concurrently located in the memory means of said personal computer.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:
determining whether a predetermined time has passed on a basis of said first functional generation information; and

obtaining, when said determining determines that said predetermined time has passed, said second functional generation information registered in said information providing apparatus via said network.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising updating the application software stored in said memory to application software corresponding to said second functional generation information located at the second URL when the determining determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 8, further comprising:
determining whether said application software has the second functions corresponding to said second functional generation information when the determining determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information; and

updating, when said determining determines that said application software does not have the second functions corresponding to said second functional generation information,

the application software stored in said memory to a newest application software corresponding to said second functional generation information located at the second URL.

17. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium including computer executable instructions, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method as claimed in claim 10, said method further comprising:

determining whether a predetermined time has passed on a basis of said first functional generation information; and

obtaining, when said determining determines that said predetermined time has passed, said second functional generation information registered in said information providing apparatus via said network.

18. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium including computer executable instructions, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method as claimed in claim 10, said method further comprising updating the application software stored in said memory to application software corresponding to said second functional generation information located at the second URL when the determining determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information.

19. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium including computer executable instructions, wherein the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method as claimed in claim 10, said method further comprising:

determining whether said application software has the second functions corresponding to said second functional generation information when the determining determines that said

second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information; and

updating, when said determining determines that said application software does not have the second functions corresponding to said second functional generation information, the application software stored in said memory to a newest application software corresponding to said second functional generation information located at the second URL.

20. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

a memory configured to separately store functional generation information and application software, wherein the functional generation information enables the application software to access functions, independent of a software version of the application software, when the functional generation information is concurrently located in the memory with the application software, the functional generation information including a first URL that corresponds to an external location where the functional generation information is registered, ~~and~~ a second URL that corresponds to an external location where an update to the application software is registered, and a combination of cryptographic keys;

a managing unit configured to manage first functional generation information stored in said memory that enables the application software to access first functions;

an obtaining unit configured to obtain second functional generation information that, if located in the memory, would enable the application software to access second functions, wherein the second functional generation information is registered in an information providing apparatus that is remotely located from said information processing apparatus at the first URL and connected to said information processing apparatus via a network, and wherein said obtaining unit obtains said second functional generation information based on said first functional generation information;

a comparing and determining unit configured to compare said first functional generation information and said second functional generation information and configured to determine which of said first or second functional generation information is a newest functional generation information; and

an information updating unit configured to update said first functional generation information stored in said memory to said newest functional generation information, when said comparing and determining unit determines that said second functional generation information is newer than said first functional generation information, such that said memory contains said second functional generation information and the application software, independent of the software version, is able to access the second functions.